United Nations S/2016/1095

Security Council

Distr.: General
23 December 2016

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the first 90-day report on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Colombia. The Mission's ceasefire monitoring and verification responsibilities were activated, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2261 (2016), following the signing, in Cartagena, Colombia, on 26 September 2016, of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. Much has transpired in that short period to both challenge and ultimately reaffirm the peace process. The present report is focused, in particular, on developments since my letter dated 26 October 2016 addressed to the President of the Council (S/2016/902). In that letter, I requested that the Council authorize the Mission to verify the implementation of the ceasefire protocol signed on 13 October 2016 until a new final agreement had been reached by the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People's Army (FARC-EP). As the period concludes, and as noted in my letter dated 14 December 2016 to the President of the Council (S/2016/1063), a new peace agreement has now been signed and ratified and has entered into force, signalling the beginning of peace implementation in Colombia and paving the way for the Mission to carry out the full range of its mandated tasks.

II. Major developments in the peace process

2. The narrow victory of the "No" vote in the plebiscite of 2 October 2016 made it legally impossible for the Government of the President, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, to implement the agreement signed in Cartagena. Although that result opened a period of uncertainty in the peace process, all Colombian political actors, including those opposed to the agreement, underscored their commitment to the attainment of peace through dialogue and the preservation of the ceasefire and their support for the verification role of the Mission. Large public mobilizations in favour of peace were held throughout Colombia in the weeks following the plebiscite.

16-22916 (E) 301216

Please recycle

A. Protocol of 13 October

3. Immediately after the results of the plebiscite had been made known, the President and the leader of FARC-EP, Timoleón Jiménez, reiterated their commitment to the bilateral and definitive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities declared by both parties on 29 August 2016.

4. On 3 October 2016, the Government's chief negotiator, Humberto de la Calle, and the Colombian High Commissioner for Peace, Sergio Jaramillo, travelled to Havana for discussions with the FARC-EP leadership. My Special Representative for Colombia joined the parties for consultations. Those discussions culminated in a joint communiqué, issued on 7 October 2016, in which the parties agreed to make adjustments to the agreement following a government-led political dialogue with various Colombian sectors, including promoters of the "No" vote in the plebiscite of 2 October. The parties also agreed to develop a temporary protocol to consolidate the ceasefire by establishing a clear separation of forces and defining the rules to be observed by both sides. In the communiqué, the parties requested the Security Council to authorize the Mission to verify the ceasefire protocol as the international component and coordinator of a tripartite monitoring and verification mechanism, in line with the mandated tasks set for the Mission in resolution 2261 (2016), except for the verification of the laying down of arms by FARC-EP, which would be undertaken following the adoption of a new agreement.

5. On 13 October 2016, the parties signed a ceasefire protocol, developed during the course of discussions in which my Special Representative and the Mission's Chief Observer participated. It outlined a transitional separation of forces to last until a new agreement was concluded. In it, the parties called for FARC-EP to locate its forces in temporary pre-grouping points and the Colombian armed forces to redeploy their units to ensure a minimum distance of 3 km between them and FARC-EP camps located at the points. The Government agreed to bear responsibility for providing logistical support to the points beginning 30 days after the signing of the protocol. The protocol also contained rules of behaviour for the parties designed to avoid the possibility of armed confrontation and threats of violence or risk to the civilian population.

6. The tasks of the Mission with regard to verification of the protocol were to organize the operations of the mechanism, taking into account the coordination of tasks, threat analysis and logistical requirements; to monitor and visit FARC-EP camps; to monitor the security zones and visit redeployed army units; and to visit neighbouring population centres in order to interact with the local population and authorities.

B. National dialogue

7. In the meantime, the search for a new peace agreement involved talks between the Government and FARC-EP in Havana, and a "national dialogue for union and reconciliation" in Bogotá, led by the President, and involving discussions with various sectors, including leaders of the "No" campaign.

8. The national dialogue gathered proposals throughout October 2016 from various sectors with regard to adjustments to the agreement signed in Cartagena. The dialogue included contact with opponents and supporters of the agreement, churches, victims' associations and civil society organizations. On 5 November, the President indicated that the Government had received more than 500 proposed amendments. The Supreme Court also suggested modifications to provisions regarding the transitional justice framework.

9. On 7 October, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the President for his determined efforts to bring an end to the long-standing armed conflict. That decision gave further impetus to efforts to conclude a new peace agreement.

10. Following weeks of discussions in Bogotá and Havana, delegations of the Government and FARC-EP reached a new peace agreement in Havana on 12 November, which was later signed in Bogotá on 24 November. They stressed that it incorporated changes and contributions provided by diverse groups participating in the national dialogue. The parties invited all Colombians and the international community to accompany and support the new peace agreement and its prompt implementation.

C. New peace agreement

11. The new peace agreement includes changes and clarifications in relation to the previous text. While its conclusion was widely welcomed, opponents continued to insist on tougher sentences for FARC-EP leaders responsible for grave crimes and their ineligibility for elected political office until they complied with the sanctions imposed by the special jurisdiction for peace. The parties did not concede on those points, insisting that it would be unrealistic to expect guerrilla leaders to negotiate their own incarceration and reiterating that the essence of a political settlement was to ensure that the armed group was able to make the transition from armed conflict to politics.

12. The new peace agreement does not include changes to the chapter on verification of the ceasefire, the cessation of hostilities and the laying down of arms, which has not been the subject of commentary or critique by the opponents to the agreement signed in September. The functions of the Mission remain unchanged and in line with the provisions of resolutions 2261 (2016) and 2307 (2016). The new text indicates, as did the previous one, that the parties will request a General Assembly mandate for a follow-on United Nations political mission to verify the commitments regarding the process of the reintegration of FARC-EP elements into civilian life and the implementation of personal and collective security measures. The new peace agreement also provides a role for that political mission to supervise compliance with sentences imposed by the special jurisdiction for peace, in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In addition, the new peace agreement expands the role of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in support of its implementation.

13. Both parties to the peace agreement agreed that its ratification would be effected through Congress. Shortly after the signing, both chambers of Congress overwhelmingly ratified it. The parties agreed that 1 December 2016 would be

considered "D-Day", marking the beginning of the timetable of action by the Government and FARC-EP leading to the grouping of FARC-EP combatants and militias in 27 transitional local zones and points for normalization where the laying down of arms would take place. Nevertheless, preparatory work for that grouping and for the verification by the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism was not completed at that time, raising questions as to whether subsequent deadlines could be met.

14. On 2 December, the Government and FARC-EP set up a follow-up, promotion and verification commission, which is to review and verify the implementation of the peace agreement and resolve any differences that may arise between the parties. They also set up a national council in charge of developing plans for the reintegration of FARC-EP members. The Government later convened a ministerial-level national commission on security guarantees, chaired by the President, which is aimed at dismantling criminal structures responsible for homicides and massacres threatening those participating in the implementation of the peace agreement and in peacebuilding.

15. A critical step towards a more rapid implementation of the peace agreement was taken on 14 December when the Constitutional Court endorsed a broadening of the President's authority to issue decree-laws relating to its implementation and a fast-track congressional procedure for the consideration and approval of its legislative agenda. In that regard, the Government submitted a draft amnesty law with the expectation that it would be approved by the end of December. In a related development, FARC-EP designated six representatives who, in compliance with the agreement, would participate without the right to vote in congressional debates on draft legislation relating to peace implementation.

D. Security context

16. The fragility of the ceasefire, in the absence of a definitive peace agreement, was dramatically illustrated on 13 November when two FARC-EP members were killed in Bolívar department, the first casualties since 2015 in the conflict between the Government and FARC-EP. This was widely viewed as evidence of the urgent need to proceed rapidly towards the conclusion of a peace agreement and the full implementation of the ceasefire provisions. This incident was investigated by the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, as explained in paragraph 25 below.

17. A series of homicides and threats in November and early December targeting community leaders in rural areas long affected by the conflict generated widespread concern. Many of those targeted were also reportedly members of the leftist movement Marcha Patriótica, raising questions regarding possible political motivations and the degree of coordination behind the incidents. There is no consensus on the mix of various factors, namely, criminal, economic and political, that may be involved in the violence. Nevertheless, those incidents demonstrated the relevance and timeliness of the establishment of a national commission on security guarantees and the importance of the effective functioning of the special investigative unit of the office of the Attorney-General, among other provisions of the peace agreement.

III. Mission tasks

A. Activities relating to the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities and coordination of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism

Deployment and monitoring of the separation of forces

18. In accordance with resolution 2261 (2016), the Mission began its monitoring and verification functions on 27 September 2016, following the signing of the original agreement. By that time, the Mission had already deployed observers and substantive staff to the eight agreed regions and had established offices in five of them where facilities were available: Florencia, Popayán, San José del Guaviare, Valledupar and Villavicencio. The Mission had deployed to temporary locations in the other three regions, namely, Bucaramanga, Medellín and Quibdó, while permanent office premises were identified.

19. By the end of September, the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism was established in Bogotá, with the participation of observers from the Government and FARC-EP. Since then, the deployment of those observers to the regions has been taking place gradually and is nearly complete, with the exception of the Quibdó regional headquarters, where FARC-EP observers have not yet been deployed. In Bucaramanga and Medellín, the three components remain in temporary locations.

20. The result of the plebiscite, however, brought to a halt the Mission's formal monitoring and verification activities, given that the agreement signed in September had not entered into force. The Mission reinitiated monitoring and verification activities on 7 November, following the letter dated 31 October 2016 from the President of the Security Council (S/2016/923), in which he noted that the Council would authorize the Mission to verify the separation of forces between the national armed forces and FARC-EP units located in the temporary pre-grouping points, as agreed to in the ceasefire protocol.

21. Monitoring by the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism of the implementation of the ceasefire protocol has proved difficult owing to a series of factors, including a lack of definition in the number of temporary pre-grouping points (56 were initially agreed upon and then increased to 72); an inadequate flow of information, until early December, from the parties to the mechanism and between them; and, more generally, the impediments to normal functionality inherent to carrying out such a complex arrangement as a tripartite monitoring mechanism. On the ground, the separation of forces was carried out largely through direct bilateral coordination of army and FARC-EP movements, and several incidents were avoided thanks to the level of confidence between members of the national armed forces and FARC-EP in the field. Mechanism coordination as foreseen in the protocol did take place, but to a limited extent. The Mission and its partners in the Mechanism are working to improve coordination and information flow within the framework of the Mechanism.

22. Early in December, the United Nations, government and FARC-EP observers began to deploy to their 27 local headquarters. At the time of writing, 10 local headquarters were occupied, which has allowed the Monitoring and Verification

Mechanism to monitor an increasing number of temporary pre-grouping points and to begin planning for the monitoring of the local zones and points of which FARC-EP will concentrate its forces and of which the laying down of arms should be completed. The trust between members of the Armed Forces and FARC-EP has been confirmed during the deployment of the Mechanism both regionally and locally. There has been a remarkable level of integration and cooperation among observers from all three components of the Mechanism.

Monitoring of the provision of logistics

23. The ceasefire protocol provided for the Government to deliver logistical support consisting of food, health care and communications to FARC-EP units in the temporary pre-grouping points beginning 30 days after the protocol's entry into force. Inadequate information from both parties with regard to logistical arrangements made it difficult for the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism to monitor the process. Communications needs were adequately addressed through the provision of cellular phones. Arrangements were made to provide food supplies at 40 locations. In several cases, however, perishable products spoiled during transport or due to a lack of refrigeration. In early December, FARC-EP refused to receive further supplies until the Government complied with its commitment under the protocol to provide locally obtained food. The first public tenders to that effect were advertised in mid-December. At the time of writing, there was no system in place in either the temporary pre-grouping points or the local, regional and national Mechanism headquarters for FARC-EP health care. In the meantime, however, the Mechanism has undertaken efforts to ensure that assistance is provided on a case-by-case basis.

24. With regard to the establishment of FARC-EP camps in the zones and points, the decision reached in August 2016 that FARC-EP members would build their own camps with the help of material provided by the Government was reaffirmed early in December. In 17 of the 27 zones and points, construction is about to begin.

Investigation of incidents

25. The definitive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities declared by the parties on 29 August 2016 held during the reporting period, notwithstanding the fragile environment owing to uncertainty surrounding the future of the peace agreement. Since the entry into force of the ceasefire protocol, the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism has received 27 requests for investigation of incidents. The most serious incident took place on 13 November when two FARC-EP members were killed and a third was captured in the municipality of Santa Rosa del Sur, Bolívar department. The investigation of the incident by the Mechanism concluded that commitments made under the ceasefire protocol had been breached. In addition, an investigation was carried out of an incident on 12 November in Tumaco, Nariño department, in which two people died and two were wounded. FARC-EP took full responsibility for that violation of its commitments. Although isolated incidents, they still deeply contradict the popular clamour for an end to all deaths on account of the conflict.

Liaison with civil society

26. In accordance with its mandate, the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism has been regularly meeting civil society organizations that have expressed interest in supporting its activities. The organizations have shared information with the Mechanism about the situation in the zones and points to which the Mechanism is to deploy and about the hopes, fears and misgivings of the local population. They have stressed the need for sustained information and outreach to the public in these sensitive regions and their willingness to assist.

Assessment of activities to date

27. On 7 December, the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism issued a communiqué in which it assessed steps taken by D+5, the date by which FARC-EP was to begin to move towards the zones and points. On the positive side, it noted that local zones and points had been identified, that the parties had complied with their commitment to share information with the Mechanism regarding the deployment of their forces, that FARC-EP had initiated movement towards zones and points as part of its commitment under the ceasefire protocol and that the Mechanism had deployed to the regions, trained its staff and initiated verification of incidents. On the other hand, the Mechanism noted that the implementation of commitments had been affected by the adverse result of the plebiscite of 2 October. The Mechanism drew attention to the following key challenges requiring urgent attention: setting up camps at the 27 zones and points so that FARC-EP members could establish themselves there; meeting the needs of pre-grouped FARC-EP members, in compliance with the ceasefire protocol; and deploying the Mechanism to the remaining regional offices and to the 27 local sites. The Mechanism also noted, as mentioned above, the need for improvement in the information flows within it to allow it to fulfil its role.

B. Activities relating to the laying down of arms

28. In accordance with resolution 2261 (2016) and the peace agreement, the Mission is responsible for monitoring and verifying the laying down of arms by FARC-EP, including verification of the destruction of unstable explosive materiel.

29. Preparations have been undertaken for the Mission to perform these tasks. By the time that the present report is issued, the Mission will be in a position to register the weapons of FARC-EP when its members arrive at the local zones and points and to store the weapons that are to be handed over by the senior members of FARC-EP who will be engaging in the political process and those who are observers within the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism.

30. Preparations are also under way for the storage of weapons at a dedicated United Nations site within the FARC-EP camps in the local zones and points. The Mission has been working with both parties to agree to a final design for the United Nations laying down of arms sites, including the associated accommodation where United Nations observers will be present. The procurement process for the building of these camps is under way and is being fast-tracked to ensure that the sites will be ready on time.

31. A key task of the Mission within the laying down of arms process will be the verification of the destruction of unsafe materiel in FARC-EP weapons caches. This is a complex task owing to the estimated number of caches and the inherent risk in dealing with unsafe weaponry. The Mission will require technical expertise and the ability to access remote locations in a safe and timely manner.

32. While the Mission has been undertaking detailed preparations with regard to the laying down of arms, the costing for this activity and a request for financing were not included in the Mission's budget proposal for 2017 because, at the time of submission, the provisions of the peace agreement on the laying down of arms were not yet in force. The Security Council was informed in my letter dated 14 December (S/2016/1063) that the Mission would proceed with the full range of tasks set out in its resolutions 2261 (2016) and 2307 (2016), including the laying down of arms. The Mission will seek supplementary resources associated with the completion of this task.

C. Liaison, coordination and substantive support

33. The Mission has reached out to national, departmental and local authorities, communities and civil society organizations with the goal of explaining its mandate and the work of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and of receiving feedback about their perceptions and recommendations relating to the Mission's tasks. Visits were carried out to numerous locations, including most of the municipalities that will house zones and points for the laying down of arms. With a view to firming up support for the verification of the ceasefire and the laying down of arms, the Mission has maintained a dialogue with sectors critical of the agreement signed in September.

34. A special effort has been made to engage with women's groups to include their perspective, views and recommendations on the Mission's activities and to establish the confidence necessary to receive information regarding potential gender-based violence.

35. A solid relationship has been established with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Colombia, and the Mission participates regularly in the main coordination bodies of the United Nations country team. The latter has been reviewing the peace agreement and is designing common strategies to maximize support for its implementation. In particular, it is identifying the capacities that it can collectively bring to bear on the stabilization of conflict areas, in particular the zones and points of which the laying down of arms will take place and the municipalities in which they are located. Attention to socioeconomic and humanitarian needs in these sensitive areas will contribute to consolidating the ceasefire, the laying down of arms and the initial reintegration of FARC-EP combatants.

IV. Mission set-up and structures

36. On 15 September, the Government and the United Nations signed a status-of-mission agreement.

37. The Mission is now operational at the national level and in the eight regions. At the national, regional and local headquarters, the Mission is co-located with the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. At the local level, Mission staff were undertaking initial operational activities from 10 locations as of mid-December and were expected by the time of issuance of the present report to be deployed in 16 local headquarters. Shortly thereafter, an additional eight local Mechanism headquarters are scheduled to be established. Of the 27 local zones and points at which local Mechanism headquarters are planned, 3 remain for which negotiations for the rental of land for use by the Mechanism are continuing. At the time of writing, there was no confirmed date for the opening of the remaining locations.

A. Observers

38. Deployment of observers stands at 280 of the 450 needed for the full monitoring and verification of the ceasefire and laying down of arms. Of the observers currently deployed, 43 (15 per cent) are women. The arrival of the remaining observers is planned in stages, with full deployment scheduled to be attained by February 2017.

B. Civilian staff

39. The Mission has adopted a proactive approach to the recruitment of civilian staff by identifying needs and advertising posts pending the approval of the United Nations budgetary authorities. This approach has been required in the light of the very short period between the entry into force of the peace agreement and the requested activation of the Mission and the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism.

40. Prior to the signing of the peace agreement, the Mission had identified staff and United Nations Volunteers for potential deployment to local sites. Since the signing, the Mission has begun deploying these staff for service at the local level. Currently, the Mission has 68 civilian staff and 22 Volunteers.

C. Mission support

41. The Mission continued to rely on existing United Nations capacity in Colombia to facilitate administrative, logistical and financial services, primarily through the United Nations Development Programme. Letters of assist setting out the scope and description of logistical and administrative support to be provided by the Government to the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and the Mission are currently under negotiation, following extensive discussions between the Mission and the Government. An area of continued concern remains medical coverage for observers, which is to be provided under the ambit of one of the letters of assist. Every effort is being made to conclude this letter of assist before the end of 2016.

42. As authorized in resolution 230[illegible]2016), costs relating to the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism are to be shared equally with the Government. The Mission, in coordination with Headquarters and the Government, is developing methods for

capturing and reimbursing these costs. A reimbursement for an initial submission of expenses by the Government is forthcoming.

43. In accordance with these cost-sharing provisions, the Government has, to date, provided 63 of a total of 158 vehicles required for the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and the Mission. The remaining vehicles are scheduled for deployment in accordance with the opening of the local Mechanism headquarters. Of the 158 vehicles, 102 will be utilized by the Mechanism and 56 by the Mission. For operational air transportation, the Mission is currently dependent on government-provided assets, but it is working with Headquarters to position dedicated aviation capacity. For mobile and static communications in remote regions, the Mission has been expanding the existing Department of Safety and Security radio network with additional repeaters and equipment to serve the needs of the Mechanism and the Mission. Five of the eight regions already have enhanced radio connectivity and work is under way to connect the remaining regions using high-frequency, VHF and satellite telephony.

D. Security

44. The Government, specifically the national police, continues to provide permanent security to the Mission and the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. The United Nations security management system covers the country team and the Mission in an integrated security structure. Regional security officers have been deployed to each regional office to ensure compliance with the policies and procedures of the security management system. They advise the Mission's heads of regional office and the Chief of Regional Observers on security issues. Mission security focal points have been designated at each local headquarters. Security officers have participated in the tripartite teams that carried out technical visits to the zones and points at which the laying down of arms will take place. On the basis of these visits, and provided that all the proposed security risk management measures are effectively and timely implemented, the residual and expected risk levels would be medium. The Department of Safety and Security has determined that the Mission's activities are viable from a security viewpoint as long as those measures are in place.

E. Conduct and discipline

45. The Mission is committed to preventing incidents of misconduct involving its personnel, in particular sexual exploitation and abuse. To that end, a situation-specific risk analysis at the Mission headquarters and regional offices was carried out to identify internal and external factors that may influence the behaviour of United Nations personnel. A sexual exploitation and abuse task force, established during the month of November, has been tasked with identifying and recommending mitigating measures, including the establishment of a list of off-limit places at which the presence of Mission personnel would be prohibited.

46. As part of its prevention and outreach efforts, the Mission maintains regular contact with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and with the humanitarian community and women's associations at the national and local levels

in order to provide information on United Nations zero-tolerance policy and on preventive measures taken by the Mission. The Mission has also requested support to establish an effective reporting mechanism for potential incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse and to facilitate assistance to victims.

V. Observations

47. Much has happened over the reporting period to test, and ultimately reaffirm, the Colombian peace process. It has been a time of protracted political uncertainty compounded by at least two challenges: continued violence in the conflict zones and growing pains in the implementation and monitoring of the ceasefire protocol. Nevertheless, the parties' ability to maintain the ceasefire confirms their determination to accomplish the transition from war to peace, backed by overwhelming popular support for an end to the conflict. The successful separation of forces provided under the protocol, which was achieved through cooperation on the ground between members of the national armed forces and FARC-EP, confirms the importance of that relationship and the need to consolidate it further.

48. Following the decision of 14 December of the Constitutional Court to allow the fast-track adoption of the legislative agenda of the peace agreement, implementation can now begin in earnest and with the undivided attention of the parties and those national and international actors committed to the success of the peace process. It is critical that it does. I welcome the parties' rapid establishment of key implementation commissions and the Government's decision to redouble efforts with regard to the logistics of the FARC-EP camps and the deployment of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. I encourage international actors to accompany what should be a committed and sustained effort by all to rapidly deliver tangible peace dividends to the areas affected by the conflict, including improved security. I take this opportunity to thank the Security Council for its commitment to supporting the peace process and to the Member States that have provided the observers that the Mission needs to fulfil its mandate. I should also like to once again commend the guarantor countries, Cuba and Norway, as well as the accompanying countries, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Chile, for their critical role in the peace process.

49. I have taken note of the fact, recently announced by the FARC-EP leadership, that several field commanders refused to embrace the peace process, but that this does not reflect the position of the FARC-EP membership as a whole. However, it does remind us that the transition from conflict to peace in Colombia faces unique difficulties, including a pattern of insecurity in rural areas bypassed by State institutions, a thriving illicit economy and entrenched social, economic and political fractures inherited from a long history of conflict. A concrete example of the challenges that the country's transition to peace faces is the movement of some armed groups, paramilitary or otherwise, towards areas vacated by FARC-EP, where they may attempt to violently establish their control.

50. It is important to keep in mind that the provisions of the peace agreement extend beyond the ceasefire and the laying down of arms to measures such as rural reform, the combating of illicit drugs and the expansion of guarantees for inclusive political participation. I therefore support the parties' strategy to simultaneously

move forward along all these lines. A successful transition will not be attained piecemeal.

51. Achieving momentum in the implementation process is important. The fast-track procedure makes it possible. The approaching launch of the campaign for the national elections in 2018 makes it necessary. Joint efforts that transcend existing political divisions about the peace agreement are also needed to consolidate peace. The cessation of hostilities and the laying down of arms are subjects of national consensus, as are many other steps that derive from them, including the reintegration of FARC-EP members in conditions of security and the broader objective of stabilizing conflict areas. I encourage efforts to forge the broadest possible unity around the implementation of the peace agreement, in particular in the rural areas in which polarization, combined with the widespread use of violence, can have a deadly effect.

52. While remaining confident of the overall commitment of the parties to achieving peace, I have noted some initial difficulties in the implementation of the ceasefire protocol, including missed timelines, logistical flaws and inadequate compliance. It is critical that these issues be remedied as the process of implementation begins in earnest and that the implementation process be permeated by a spirit of detailed and uncompromising compliance with obligations assumed in Havana. This is equally important to the national and international credibility of, and support for, the peace process. In close cooperation with both parties, the United Nations Mission in Colombia will continue to do its utmost to ensure that those high standards are met.

53. I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative, Jean Arnault, and to the international observers and civilian personnel serving under his leadership for their continued dedication in support of the peace process in Colombia.